

SCOPING INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Middle Potlatch Creek Grazing Lease Application

Cottonwood Field Office

DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2023-0004-EA

This information document summarizes a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposal to respond to an application to graze goats on the Middle Potlatch Creek Allotment #36180 near Troy, Idaho in Latah County (see attached map). The allotment is currently allocated for grazing of cattle so the application necessitates a conversion of the type use from cattle to goats/sheep as well as change in use dates and numbers. The BLM will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) which will describe the environmental effects of the proposal and we invite public comments for consideration in our analysis.

Background

The forty-acre Middle Potlatch Creek allotment is an isolated parcel of BLM managed land that is a custodial management category allotment. It is surrounded by private land and has not been leased since 1995. Legal description of the allotment is SESE Section 2, T. 38 N., R. 4 W. Boise Meridian. The allotment is on the breaks of Middle Potlatch Creek and vegetation is a mixture of poor to fair condition bluebunch wheatgrass community and dry conifer forest depending upon aspect. Approximately 0.20 miles of Middle Potlatch Creek flows thru the south-west corner of the allotment. Topography is steep, up to 70% slopes, with elevations of approximately 2,550 feet at the highest ridge to 2,100 feet near the creek. The applicant has developed a business on their adjacent private lands providing market goats and breeding stock. They would like to lease the BLM lands for additional forage. Goats will primarily graze private pasture with incidental use of BLM lands.

Preliminary Purpose and Need for Action

The need for the action is to respond to an application for grazing use on the Middle Potlatch Creek Allotment.

The purpose of the action is to implement direction as described in the Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved December 21, 2009. It is consistent with the following decisions from the RMP:

Goal LG-1—Provide opportunities for grazing while meeting rangeland health standards.

Objective LG-1.1—Identify lands available for livestock grazing.

Action LG-1.1.1—Continue grazing on existing allotments as identified in the Northern Idaho Grazing Management EIS (BLM 1981b). . .

The RMP allocates 2 AUMS of forage for the Middle Potlatch Creek Allotment #36180.

Objective VN-1.2—Plant communities dominated by nonnative annual plants will be managed to promote soil stability and rehabilitation opportunities.

Preliminary Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action

Authorize grazing on the Middle Potlatch Creek Allotment as requested by the applicant as shown in **Table 1. Requested Grazing Use.**

Table 1. Requested Grazing Use

Allotment		Livestock		Period		% PL¹	Type Use	AUMs²
Name	Number	Number	Kind	Begin	End			
Middle Potlatch Creek	36180	100	Sheep/Goats	3/01	11/01	10	Custodial ³	2

¹ %PL: Percent forage from public land

² AUM: Animal Unit Month – the amount of forage to sustain an animal for one month

³ Custodial type use allows override of the AUM calculation in BLM's Rangeland Administration System (RAS) in order to allow flexibility in the season of use and livestock numbers utilizing the AUMs allocated for the allotment.

The following terms and conditions will be made a part of the proposal.

- Grazing use of BLM lands may occur a total of two weeks during the authorized grazing period.
- No more than an average of 50% utilization may occur on upland native plants during the grazing period.
- The average stubble height of riparian vegetation on BLM lands will not be less than six inches at the end of the grazing or growing season, whichever is later.
- The average utilization level of streambank browse species should not exceed 30% of the total number of leaders.
- Salt cannot be placed within ¼ mile of any water source on public lands. Supplemental feed cannot be placed on public lands.
- Under 43 CFR 4130.3-2(H) lessees shall provide reasonable access across private and leased lands to the BLM for the orderly management and protection of the public lands.
- Allotment listed on this grazing lease are subject to the requirements of 43 CFR 4180, fundamentals of rangeland health and standards and guidelines (S&G) for grazing administration. This lease shall be modified, if necessary to meet these requirements upon completion of a S&G assessment as scheduled by the authorized officer.

No Action

Deny the application to obtain a grazing lease.

Preliminary Issues

The BLM has identified the following potential issues for analysis related to the proposal.

- Would the change in livestock type, duration of use, and number of authorized animals result in unacceptable impact to cultural or historical resources?

- Would there be unacceptable impact to remaining native vegetation on the allotment as a result of the new grazing authorization?
- Would the change in duration and intensity of livestock use cause unacceptable impacts to soil resources?
- What impacts, if any, would occur to water quality or riparian conditions as a result in the authorized use change?

Public Input Requested

Federal actions must be analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations to determine potential environmental consequences.

The purpose of this document is to inform interested and affected parties of the proposal and to solicit comments to assist with the NEPA review of the proposal. As previously mentioned, the BLM will document our analysis of the proposal in an EA. Comments received in response to this solicitation may be used to identify potential environmental issues related to the proposed action or alternatives to the proposed action as we prepare the EA.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will also use this public participation opportunity under the NEPA to assist the agency in satisfying the public involvement requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 U.S.C. 470(f)) pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). The information about historic and cultural resources within the area potentially affected by the proposed action will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources in the context of both NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA.

The BLM will consult with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis in accordance with Executive Order 13175 and other policies. Tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets and potential impacts to cultural resources, will be given due consideration.

We invite Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as tribes and other stakeholders interested in, or affected by the proposed action to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, to request participation in the development of the environmental analysis as a cooperating agency.

The BLM invites comments from the public on the proposed action, preliminary issues, and alternatives. Comments made on this proposal would be **most helpful if they are received by April 3, 2023** and are directly relevant to the proposal and project area.

Comments may be submitted through the contact information shown below. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization. Issues that are outside the scope of the proposal will not be addressed at this planning level.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

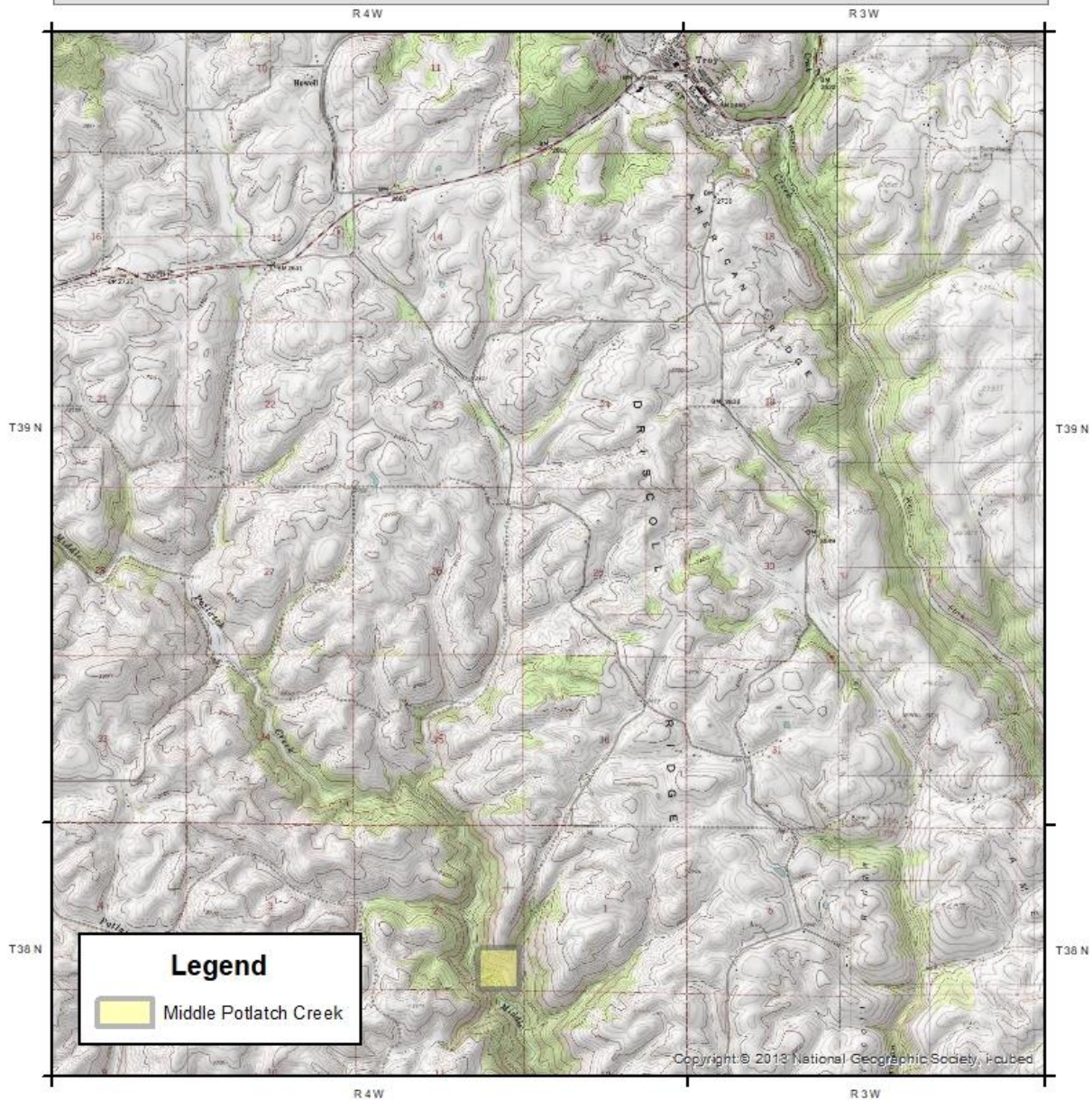
Contact

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Attachment:

- 1- Allotment Map

Middle Potlatch Creek #36180



Map Created: 6/27/2019

The surface management status ("land ownership") should be used as a general guide only. Official land records, located at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other offices, should be checked for up-to-date information concerning any specific tract of land.

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Map Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

